

Remarks

Applicant believes that claims 1-31 and 33-36 are pending in the application. Applicant's previous amendment inadvertently referred to the claim set as filed in the PCT application, but not as filed in the USPTO. In this amendment, claims 1, 4, 6, 7, 13, 20, 23, 27, 29, 30, and 31 have been amended to correct deficiencies identified by the Examiner based on the originally filed claims and those introduced by the previous amendment. No new matter has been added. Reconsideration of the claims is respectfully requested.

In the previous amendment, Applicants added new claims 36-39, but due to the numbering of the claims as originally filed in the USPTO, the Examiner properly renumbered newly added claims 36-39 as claims 33-36. Applicants respectfully note that renumbered claim 35 should now depend from renumbered claim 34, rather than depending from claim 37, as was originally set forth in the amendment.

The Examiner has objected to claims 6-29 under 37 CFR 1.75 as being in improper form because a multiple dependent claim cannot depend from another multiple dependent claim. Applicant has amended the claims to remove the multiple dependencies. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the objection be withdrawn. Additionally, the Examiner objected to the phrase "in the displacement mentioned" being offset by dashes. Applicant has amended claim 3 to remove the identified phrase. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the objection be withdrawn.

Claims 1,4, 30, and 31 were objected to for various informalities. Applicant respectfully submits that the instant amendment has corrected each of the perceived deficiencies identified by the Examiner. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the objections be withdrawn.

The Examiner has rejected claims 31 and 33 under 35 U.S.C. Section 112, first paragraph. In particular, the Examiner objected to the inclusion of the spring in claim 31. Applicant has deleted the reference to the spring from claim 31. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection be withdrawn. Additionally, the Examiner has asserted that the specification as originally filed does not describe in detail the lock of claim 33. Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection. Support for the details of the lock may be found in the drawings in Figures 3A and 3B, and in the specification at, for example, page 10, lines 15-37, where it is explained that at the location of the pin 41, the anchor line 32 is permanently attached to the plate 35 by a socket 40, and that the lower end of the socket 40 is provided with a hook 44. Accordingly, Applicant requests that the rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 1, 2, 3, 30, 31 and 33-36 were rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Japanese reference 60-67289. Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection. Independent claims 1 and 33 undoubtedly calls for a rigid hook. In applying the Japanese reference to claim 1, however, the Examiner ignores the hinge and pivoting end portion of the hook of the Japanese reference. The "hook" of the Japanese reference is simply not rigid, and, in fact, appears only to be capable of being released from the ring 7 because it is not rigid. That is, "but for" the presence of the hinge 3, the "hook" of the Japanese reference would not appear capable of

releasing the ring 7. Further, the Examiner contends that the "hook" 1, 2, and 4 of the Japanese reference pivots about the axis 10, which is located on the side of the pin 7 facing away from the fluke. Applicant respectfully disagrees. The "hook" 1, 2, and 4 and the anchor line 5 in the Japanese reference are undoubtedly on the same side of the pivot axis 10. That is, Applicant can discern no interpretation of the Japanese reference in which the "hook" 1, 2, and 4 and the anchor line 5 may be considered to be on opposite sides of the pivot axis 10. Claim 1 requires that the axis be "located at the side of the pin facing away from the fluke." Under the Examiner's interpretation of the Japanese reference, however, the axis 10 is located at the side of the pin 7 facing toward the fluke, which is, of course, directly opposite to that claimed by Applicant.

Similarly, method claim 33 calls for the hook to be moved away from the pin in a direction counter to the direction of the swinging movement of the anchor line. This "counter" movement of the hook relative to the pin arises out of the axis being located between the hook and the anchor line. It is, in fact, this counter movement that causes the hook to become uncoupled from the pin. As discussed above, however, the axis 10 in the Japanese reference is not so positioned, and thus, the "hook" 1, 2, and 4 of the Japanese reference does not have a "counter" movement, but instead moves in the same direction as the direction of the swinging movement of the anchor line. In the absence of the "counter" movement, the Japanese reference relies on the hinged arrangement of its "hook" 1, 2, and 4 to allow the hook to disengage from the pin 7. Thus, as discussed above, the Examiner may not properly consider the hook 1, 2, and 4 of the Japanese reference to be rigid, since its operation depends on its lack of rigidity. Accordingly, Applicant requests that the rejection be withdrawn.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney at (713) 934-4050 with any questions, comments or suggestions relating to the referenced patent application.

Respectfully submitted,



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